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RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6004  
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RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 4421  
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 3398  
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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; May 22, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

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Chosun Ilbo, Dong-a Ilbo, Hankook Ilbo, Segye Ilbo,  
Seoul Shinmun, All TVs  
Top Court Upholds "Die with Dignity" Right

JoongAng Ilbo  
ROK Needs Proper Regulations on the Right to Die

Hankyoreh Shinmun  
Jurists: "A Ban on Mass Rallies in Downtown Areas Is  
Unconstitutional"

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

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Former President Kim Dae-jung said at an international symposium on  
peace and democracy hosted by Hankook University of Foreign Studies  
on May 21, "Once the Obama Administration settles in, it will enter  
into earnest dialogue with North Korea by this fall." (JoongAng,  
KBS, OhmyNews)

A high-ranking military source said on May 21 that the Ministry of  
National Defense plans to increase the number of advanced  
precision-guided weapons, such as the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff  
Missile (JASSM) and the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM), in  
order to enhance its response to North Korea's nuclear and missile  
threats. (Dong-a)

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

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U.S. President Barack Obama, upon receiving credentials from the new  
ROK Ambassador to the U.S. Han Duck-soo, said on May 20 that the  
U.S.-ROK FTA would enhance and promote bilateral ties and prosperity  
between the two allies.. (JoongAng, Dong-a, Chosun, Seoul, Segye)

U.S. Secretary of State Clinton told a Senate Appropriations  
Committee hearing on May 20, "The U.S. will not give North Korea a  
penny of aid unless the North voluntarily returns to the Six-Party  
Talks." (Chosun, Segye, All TVs, VoiceofPeople)

Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger told Fox News on May 19 that one of the immediate tasks for the Obama Administration is the North Korean nuclear issue, saying, "If we cannot deal with a country that has no natural resources that others want, no significant trade, totally dependent on its neighbors for supplies, then what is the sense of talking of an international system?" (Chosun, Dong-a, KBS)

Victor Cha, a Georgetown University professor who has recently been appointed to Korea Chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said in his meeting with Korean correspondents in Washington that the Six-Party Talks are not dead yet. (Seoul)

China, the ROK and Japan show different responses to the appointments of U.S. Ambassadors to each nation: China is pleased; the ROK is satisfied; and Japan is sullen. (Chosun)

Japan's Nihon Keizai Shimbun reported on May 21 that in North Korea's constitution, which was revised this past April, it clearly described Chairman of the National Defense Commission Kim Jong-il as its top leader and further strengthened his power. (Dong-a, Hankook, Segye)

#### MEDIA ANALYSIS

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#### -North Korea

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo cited former ROK President Kim Dae-jung as saying at a May 21 international symposium hosted by Hankook University of Foreign Studies, "Once the Obama Administration settles in, it will enter into earnest dialogue with North Korea by this fall."

Conservative Chosun Ilbo quoted ROK and U.S. experts as saying that North Korea's recent grandstanding may be motivated by internal power struggles over who is to succeed ailing leader Kim Jong-il. They said that after Kim's stroke last year, the question of succession, for which no preparations had been made, suddenly came to the fore. As a result, it appears that the hardline military seized all the power it could and stoked international tensions to keep society under control.

Conservative Chosun Ilbo and Dong-a Ilbo also carried former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's statement on May 19. He told Fox News that one of the immediate tasks for the Obama Administration is the North Korean nuclear issue, adding, "If we cannot deal with a country that has no natural resources that others want, no significant trade, totally dependent on its neighbors for supplies, then what is the sense of talking of an international system?"

Chosun Ilbo reported that U.S. Secretary of State Clinton told a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing on May 20, "The U.S. will not give North Korea a penny of aid unless the North voluntarily returns to the Six-Party Talks." The newspaper added that Secretary Clinton's "stern" response or "neglect" toward the North is being spread all throughout the Department of State.

#### -Guantanamo Bay Prison

Under the headline, "Obama's Humiliation in Guantanamo," JoongAng Ilbo reported that as the U.S. Senate voted 90-6 to reject the closure of the Guantanamo Bay prison by refusing to finance the move, President Obama's leadership has now been put to test.

Chosun Ilbo also carried the same story headlined "Obama 'Confined' to Guantanamo Prison." The newspaper replayed a New York Times story that according to an unreleased Pentagon report, 74 of the 534 prisoners already transferred abroad from the detention center in Guantanamo Bay are engaged in terrorism or militant activity.

Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun headlined its story, "Clash between Obama and Congress over Closure of Guantanamo," and Dong-a Ilbo headlined its story: "Obama In a Dilemma about Closure of Guantanamo."

#### -Iran's Missile Launch

Under the headline, "Iran Test-fires Missile, Possibly Sparking Arms Race in Middle East," Hankyoreh Shinmun reported that Iran's success in test-firing a new mid-range missile could provoke hardliners in Israel, and the U.S. also expressed concerns. Seoul Shinmun headlined its story: "Iran's Missile Launch Upsets Balance in Middle East... Is This a Prelude to an Arms Race?"

#### OPINIONS/EDITORIALS

SEOUL'S NEARSIGHTED VIEW OF THE NORTH  
(JoongAng Ilbo, May 22, 2009, Page 43)

By Kim Young-hie, senior columnist of JoongAng Ilbo

President Lee should focus on implementing the joint declaration by the two countries.

The bizarre state of inter-Korean relations represented by what is happening to the Kaesong Industrial Complex remind me of the French

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philosopher Blaise Pascal's axiom, "A meridian decides the truth."

Pascal wrote that "three degrees of latitude reverse all jurisprudence; ... A strange justice that is bounded by the river!" Truth on this side of the Pyrenees, he concluded, is false on the other side. The difference in the meridian between Seoul and Pyongyang is no more than one degree. Nonetheless, what is right in the South is wrong in the North. The South thinks it has extended its hand for reconciliation, while North Korea thinks the Lee Myung-bak Administration is clinging to overtly hostile policies.

It is true that the stalemate in inter-Korean relations, including those issues related to Kaesong and Mount Kumgang, have resulted from North Korea's domestic problems, which have been caused by Kim Jong-il's medical condition and his regime's unreasonable attempt to tame the Lee Administration. However, if we only keep blaming the North, the inter-Korean stalemate will not be resolved and the two will not be able to coexist and prosper together. Inevitably the Kaesong Industrial Complex will close down. The Lee Administration must reverse its methods of resolving problems related to those issues.

Seoul wants to resolve the Kaesong Industrial Complex issue by having negotiations to release a worker of Hyundai Asan, who has been detained inside the complex. Then it wants to keep its mechanism for resolving problems going in order to ease strained South-North relations. The government's strategy stems from its nearsighted view of finding the root of the problems of Kaesong in the industrial complex itself.

The Kaesong Industrial Complex issue is only a small part of inter-Korean relations. North Korea earns \$30 - \$40 million annually from the complex. Let's suppose that North Korea's demands are met and the annual income (from the complex) increases to \$100 million. This is, of course, not a small sum when considering the North's tight finances. However, it is a very small amount compared with South Korea's project to maintain business ties with (or provide aid to) North Korea, signed and agreed to by former President Roh Moo-hyun and Kim on October 4, 2007. That project is worth \$11.8 billion. And here we find a clue to the whole issue.

The North demands that the Lee Administration put into practice the June 15 Joint Declaration that presented a vision of cooperation between the South and the North, and the October 4 agreement that detailed how to implement the joint declaration. The demand is not

only about the economy but also North Korea's pride. The North attaches enormous meaning-much more than we can imagine-to the fact that the June 15 Joint Declaration and the October 4 agreement are the only two documents that Kim had signed. In his speech to the National Assembly last year, President Lee said the South and the North should discuss how the joint declaration and the agreement would be implemented. North Korea is unlikely to change its stance against the South, no matter how big the temptation to make money in Kaesong may be, before President Lee puts the joint declaration and the agreement into practice.

A South Korean politician said we can cling to some hope, as, even though it expresses a hardline stance against the South, North Korea has not dispatched spy submarines or staged a clash in the Yellow Sea-. North Korea refrains from physical provocation; probably because it is aware that the United States is watching. President Lee ordered the defense minister to be prudent when making remarks about North Korea and postponed participating in the Proliferation Security Initiative as suggested by the foreign and unification ministers. That is probably because Lee saw a possibility of easing relations with the North.

It is encouraging that the president has much more flexible thinking on North Korea issues than his aides. We expect President Lee to make a bold resolution.

(August 15 marks) Liberation Day (in Korea). That will be a good chance (for President Lee) to give a historic speech accepting the June 15 Joint Declaration and the October 4 agreement fully and to

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state his will to implement them. The conservative camp is likely to protest but the president must overcome it with his political power and a Messianic sense of duty as the country's leader.

South Korea's economy is 40 times larger than North Korea's. An argument that the South is under the North's thumb is thus flimsy, unless North Korea (decides to flaunt) its nuclear weapons. In order to prevent this from happening, inter-Korean dialogue must be maintained no matter what. I hope that President Lee will give a great Liberation Day speech while Kim Jong-il is still in power. That is the right way to implement pragmatism.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

#### FEATURES

WHAT OBAMA'S ASIAN AMBASSADOR PICKS REVEAL  
(Chosun Ilbo, May 22, 2009, Page 8)

By Washington Correspondent Lee Ha-won

As U.S. President Barack Obama completes his appointment of ambassadors to major countries, stark contrasts are becoming apparent among the officials chosen to represent the United States in Korea, China and Japan.

Obama evidently set the greatest store by the appointment of the ambassador to China. As he appointed Governor Jon Huntsman of Utah on Saturday, Obama said the position was "as important as any" ambassadorial post because of the wide range of issues concerning the U.S. and China. Obama said working with China was a prerequisite to dealing effectively with the global challenges of the 21st century. And he chose a figure with a substantial level of expertise. Huntsman even has a Chinese name, "Hong Bopei," and is considered pro-Chinese, having adopted a daughter from China. He is naturally favored by Beijing. Huntsman is also a heavyweight in the Republican Party, being mentioned as a possible presidential candidate in 2012. He is expected to maintain a direct line with Obama when he takes up the job.

In Korea, Kathleen Stephens is a career diplomat already appointed to the job by former President George W. Bush. She has no direct

ties to Obama, but her abilities were recognized when she successfully handled Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit to Seoul just after Clinton took office. Her other strengths are her experience as a Peace Corps volunteer back in the 1970s, when Korea was still a backward country, and her fluency in the language, which have led Koreans to welcome her. But critics point out that she needs more diplomatic skills should a sensitive issue arise comparable to the deaths of the two schoolgirls under the wheels of a U.S. military vehicle in a 2002 accident.

In stark contrast, John Roos, Obama's pick as ambassador to Japan, is an unexpected choice due to his background as a corporate lawyer specializing in mergers and acquisitions. There are Japanese media reports that say officials in Japan's Foreign Ministry are dismayed at the appointment. Clinton is believed to have favored Harvard University professor Joseph Nye, who had contributed to strengthening U.S.-Japan relations during his tenure as assistant secretary at the State Department.

But Obama apparently awarded the ambassadorship to Roos for his efforts in raising large sums of money for the presidential election campaign last year. And it seems Obama's picks for ambassadors to Germany and the U.K. were made along the same considerations.

Louis Susman, who is to go to London, is a 71-year-old former Vice President of Citigroup. His skill at hoovering up campaign funds for Obama earned him the nickname the "vacuum cleaner" by the Chicago Tribune. And Phil Murphy, a strong candidate for ambassador to Germany, is a former executive at Goldman Sachs and also played a

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large role in fundraising for Obama, according to German weekly Der Spiegel.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

STANTON